



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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Information Release

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Park Ribbon Cutting Planned for State-of-the-Art Synthetic Field

A Veteran's Day ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned at 10 a.m. for the new state-of-the-art synthetic field at the Lt. Col. Gary F. Smith Memorial Field at Grist Mill Park in Alexandria, VA. The \$1.1 million project was funded through voter-approved park bonds from the 2012 Park Bond program and community donations in honor of the American hero for whom the field was named.

Grist Mill's athletic field #5 was renamed in 2012 to honor Lt. Col. Smith (Retired), who while working as a civilian employee of the Army was killed when American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon on 9/11. His wife, Ann, who generously supported the field conversion, says "Gary loved sports so much — all through his youth, and far into adulthood. He coached so many teams, including our daughters', both when we lived overseas and here at home." She hopes "...his positive legacy will continue through the field improvements."

Lt. Col. Smith received a Soldier's Medal for heroism while serving in the Army for rescuing a soldier who became trapped when their helicopter crashed and caught fire in Vietnam. He served as soccer coach for Lee-Mount Vernon Soccer Association coaching teams that played at Grist Mill Park. As a soccer coach, he is remembered fondly for his calm demeanor and soothing voice. The fundraising and remembrance effort is being honored this year with a Fairfax County Park Foundation Eakin Philanthropy Award that will be presented to members of the Smith Family during the ribbon cutting ceremony in the park.

The Fairfax County Park Authority project to convert the natural grass field to synthetic turf also includes installation of storm drainage systems, as well as fencing, bleachers and goals. The engineering firm of Burgess and Niple designed the field improvements and FieldTurf USA, Inc. served as the contractor.

The public is invited to the ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 11, 2015 at 10 a.m., at the new field at Grist Mill Park, which is at 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria, VA.

For more information, call the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662.

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If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.